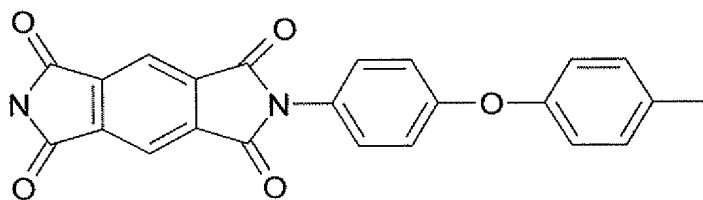


This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended): An alignment layer ~~Alignment layer~~ suitable for aligning liquid crystal (~~LC~~) molecules, said layer comprising a polymer film containing ~~characterized in that it comprises~~ at least one reactive mesogen additive (~~RM~~) in monomeric, oligomeric or polymeric form, wherein, after preparation of said alignment layer, said alignment layer contains unreacted polymerizable groups in said at least one reactive mesogen additive.
2. (Currently Amended): An alignment ~~Alignment~~ layer according to claim 1, wherein said alignment layer ~~characterized in that it~~ comprises less than 50 % by weight of RMs said at least one reactive mesogen additive.
3. (Currently Amended): An alignment ~~Alignment~~ layer according to claim 1, wherein said at least one reactive mesogen additive is ~~characterized in that the RM(s) is (are)~~ present in monomeric or oligomeric form in the alignment layer after the ~~its~~ preparation of said alignment layer.
4. (Currently Amended): An alignment ~~Alignment~~ layer according to claim 1, wherein said alignment layer ~~characterized in that it~~ is obtainable from a precursor material comprising at least one reactive mesogen (~~RM~~).
5. (Currently Amended): An alignment ~~Alignment~~ layer according to claim 1, wherein said layer ~~characterized in that it~~ is a solvent processed film.
6. (Currently Amended): An alignment ~~Alignment~~ layer according to claim 1, wherein said polymer film ~~characterized in that it~~ is a polyimide film.
7. (Currently Amended): An alignment ~~Alignment~~ layer according to claim 6, wherein said polymer film ~~characterized in that it~~ is a polyimide film having repeating units ~~of the general formula A~~



A

8. (Currently Amended): An alignment ~~Alignment~~ layer according to claim 1, wherein said alignment layer ~~characterized in that~~ it is a solvent processed cellulose based film.

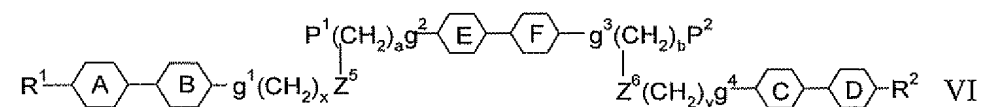
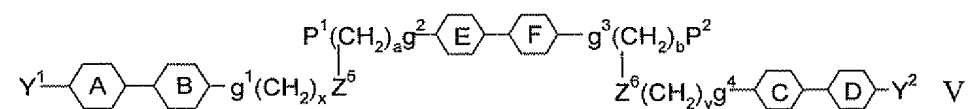
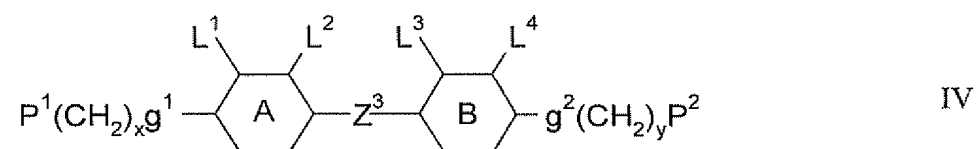
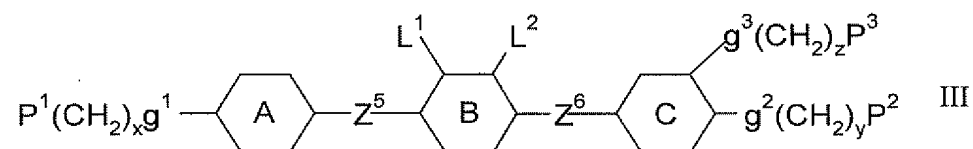
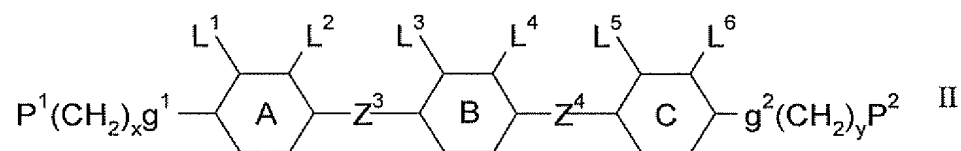
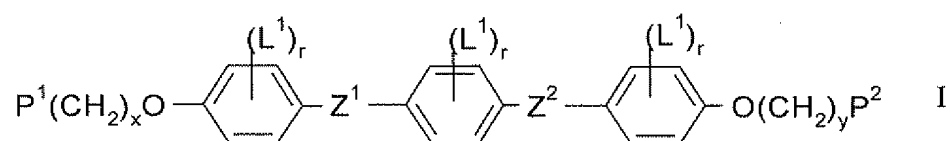
9. (Currently Amended): An alignment ~~Alignment~~ layer according to claim 1, wherein said polymer film ~~characterized in that~~ it is a triacetate cellulose (TAC) or diacetate cellulose (DAC) film.

10. (Currently Amended): An alignment ~~Alignment~~ layer according to claim 1, wherein said alignment layer ~~characterized in that~~ it is a command layer comprising one or more compounds selected from photochromic compounds, isomerizable ~~isomerisable~~ compounds, chromophores and dyes, wherein changes of the chemical structure and/or the orientational direction of said one or more ~~these~~ compounds induce a specific alignment of a liquid crystal ~~an LC~~ material coated onto said layer.

11. (Currently Amended): An alignment ~~Alignment~~ layer according to claim 10, wherein characterized in that ~~said one or more~~ compounds are selected from derivatives of azobenzene, stilbenes, spiropyran, spirooxadines,  $\alpha$ -hydrazono- $\beta$ -ketoesters, cinnamate, retinylidene, chalcone, coumarins, benzylidenephthalimidines, benzylideneacetophenones, diphenylacetylene, and ~~or~~ stilbazoles.

12. (Currently Amended): An alignment ~~Alignment~~ layer according to claim 1, wherein said at least one reactive mesogen additive is ~~characterized in that the RMs are~~ selected of one of the following formulae:

MERCK-3144



wherein

$P^1$ ,  $P^2$  and  $P^3$  are each, independently of each other, a polymerizable polymerisable group,

$Z^1$  and  $Z^2$  are each, independently of each other, -O-, -S-, -CO-, -COO-, -OCO-, -O-COO-, -OCH<sub>2</sub>-, -CH<sub>2</sub>O-, -CH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>-, -C≡C-, -CH=CH-COO-, -OCO-CH=CH- or a single bond,

$Z^3$  and  $Z^4$  are each, independently of each other, -COO-, -OCO-, -CH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>-, -CH<sub>2</sub>O-, -OCH<sub>2</sub>-, -CH=CH-, -CF=CF-, -C≡C- or a single bond,

$Z^5$  and  $Z^6$  are each, independently of each other, -O-, -COO-, -OCO-, -CH<sub>2</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>-, -CH<sub>2</sub>O-,

**MERCK-3144**

-OCH<sub>2</sub>- or a single bond,

Y<sup>1</sup> and Y<sup>2</sup> are each, independently of each other, a polar group,

R<sup>1</sup> and R<sup>2</sup> are each, independently of each other, an unpolar alkyl or alkoxy group,

A, B, C and D are each, independently of each other, 1,4-phenylene that is optionally mono-, di- or trisubstituted by L<sup>1</sup>, L<sup>2</sup>, L<sup>3</sup>, L<sup>4</sup>, L<sup>5</sup>, L<sup>6</sup> or 1,4-cyclohexylene,

L<sup>1</sup>, L<sup>2</sup>, L<sup>3</sup>, L<sup>4</sup>, L<sup>5</sup> and L<sup>6</sup> are each, independently of each other, H, F, Cl, CN or an optionally halogenated alkyl, alkoxy, alkylcarbonyl, alkoxy carbonyl or alkoxy carbonyloxy group with 1 to 7 C atoms, [[.]]

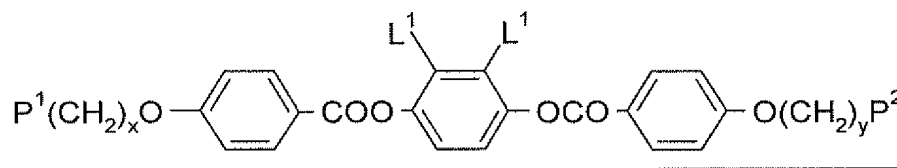
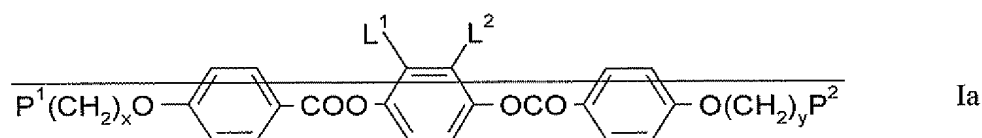
r is 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4,

x and y are each, independently of each other, an integer from 1 to 12,

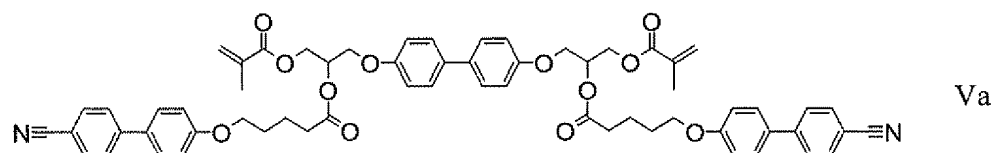
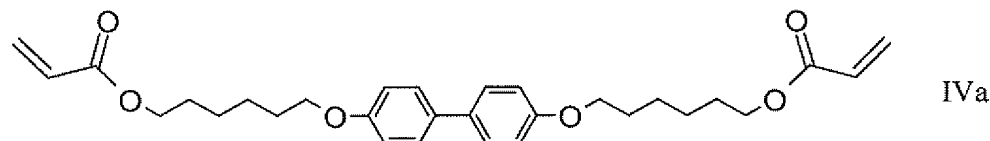
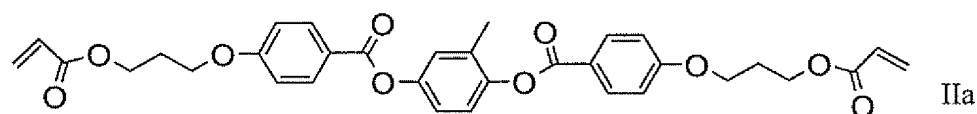
z is 1, 2 or 3, and

g<sup>1</sup>, g<sup>2</sup>, g<sup>3</sup> and g<sup>4</sup> are each, independently of each other, a single bond, -O-, -COO- or -OCO-,

13. (Currently Amended): An alignment ~~Alignment~~ layer according to claim 12, wherein said at least one reactive mesogen additive is characterized in that the RMs are selected of one of the following formulae:



MERCK-3144



and the polymer film alignment layer is a TAC or DAC film.

14. (Currently Amended): An alignment Alignment layer according to claim 1, wherein said alignment layer characterized in that is obtainable from a the precursor material that comprises 0.5 to 4 % by weight of said at least one reactive mesogen RMs.

15. (Currently Amended): A polymer Polymer precursor for preparing an alignment layer comprising a polymer film containing least one reactive mesogen additive in monomeric, oligomeric or polymeric form, wherein, after preparation of said alignment layer, said alignment layer contains unreacted polymerizable groups in said at least one reactive mesogen additive as defined in claim 4.

16. (Cancelled):

17. (Currently Amended): A laminate Laminate comprising an alignment layer according to claim 1 and a film comprising a polymerized polymerised or crosslinked liquid crystal LC material.

18. (Currently Amended): A method Method of preparing a laminate, said method comprising: by

providing a layer of a polymerizable liquid crystal polymerisable LC material onto an alignment layer according to claim 1, optionally aligning the liquid crystal LC material into

**MERCK-3144**

uniform orientation, and polymerizing ~~polymerising~~ or crosslinking the liquid crystal LC material.

19. (Currently Amended): In an optical, electrooptical, information storage, decorative and security device, the improvement wherein said device contains an Use of a precursor material, alignment layer or laminate according to claim 1 ~~in optical, electrooptical, information storage, decorative and security applications.~~

20. (Currently Amended): An optical ~~Optical~~ component or device comprising at least one ~~precursor material,~~ alignment layer or laminate according to claim 1.

21. (Currently Amended): A liquid ~~Liquid~~ crystal display comprising at least one alignment layer or laminate according to claim 1 ~~or a component comprising the same.~~

22. (New): An alignment layer according to claim 1, wherein said alignment layer comprises less than 20 % by weight of said at least one reactive mesogen additive.

23. (New): An alignment layer according to claim 1, wherein said alignment layer comprises less than 10 % by weight of said at least one reactive mesogen additive.

24. (New): An alignment layer according to claim 1, wherein said alignment layer comprises less than 5 % by weight of said at least one reactive mesogen additive.

25. (New): An alignment layer according to claim 1, wherein said alignment layer has a birefringence of less than 0.05.

26. (New): An alignment layer according to claim 1, wherein said alignment layer has a birefringence of less than 0.005.

27. (New): An alignment layer according to claim 1, wherein said alignment layer is obtained from a polymer precursor or polymer precursor solution, to which said at least one reactive mesogen is added before processing or polymerizing.

28. (New): An alignment layer according to claim 1, wherein said alignment layer is obtained by adding said at least one reactive mesogen to the polymer.

**MERCK-3144**

29. (New): An alignment layer according to claim 12, wherein said alignment layer is obtainable from a precursor material that comprises 0.5 to 4 % by weight of said at least one reactive mesogen.

30. (New): An alignment layer according to claim 12, wherein said alignment layer is obtainable from a precursor material that comprises 1 to 2 % by weight of said at least one reactive mesogen.